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Translated for this Journal.

Robert Schumann's Impressions of various Operas.

THEATRICAL NOTE-BOOK, 1847—50.

BOIELDIEU'S "JOHN OF PARIS."

(May 4, 1847, in Dresden.)

A masterly opera. Two acts, two decorations, two hours in length—all admirably contrived. "John of Paris," "Figaro," and "The Barber," the first comic operas of the world; each mirrors its composer's nation.

Instrumentation (to which my attention now is principally directed) everywhere masterly; the wind instruments, especially the clarinets and horns, treated with partiality, nowhere covering up the vocal melody—the violoncellos effective here and there as independent voices.

The horns ring in a high register, when the voice part lies still higher, very finely and blend with the voice.

MARSCHNER'S "TEMLAR AND THE JEWESS."

(May 8, 1847.)

Heard with great enjoyment. The composition here and there lacks repose, not quite clearly instrumented, with a fulness of happily conceived melodies. Considerable dramatic talent—some reminiscences of Weber.

A jewel, which cannot entirely divest itself of its rough exterior.

Treatment of the voice-parts ungrateful and smothered by the orchestra. Too much of the trombones.

The choruses went ludicrously bad; some of them should have produced a greater effect.

In short, after Weber's, the most important German Opera of recent times.

GLUCK'S "IPHIGENIA IN AULIS."

(May 15, 1847.)

Schröder-Devrient, Clytemnestra; Johanna Wagner, Iphigenia; Mitterwurzer, Agamemnon; Tichatschek, Achilles.

Richard Wagner has put the opera upon the stage; costumes and decorations very appropriate. He has also made additions to the music; I thought I heard it here and there. And he has added the conclusion: "*Nach Troja*. This is decidedly inadmissible. Gluck would perhaps have reversed the process with Richard Wagner's opera; he would have retrenched, cut out.

But what shall I say here of the opera? As long as the world stands, such music will continually come into prominence again; it can never grow old.

A great original artist. Mozart evidently stands upon his shoulders; Spontini copies him often word for word.

The conclusion of the opera again is extremely effective, as in *Armida*.

RICHARD WAGNER'S TANNHAUSER.

(Aug. 7, 1857.)

An opera not to be dispatched in a few words. Certain it is, it has a touch of genius in it. Were he as melodious a musician, as he is an intellectually gifted one, he would be the man of the age.

Much might be said about the opera, and it deserves it, but I must reserve it to another time.

DONIZETTI'S "FAVORITA."

(Aug. 30, 1847.)

I only heard two acts. Puppet-show music!

C. M. VON WEBER'S "EURYANTHE."

(Sept. 23, 1847.)

We have been transported, as we have not been for long before. The music is still too little known and recognized. It is heart's blood, the noblest he had in him; a piece of his life this opera has cost him, surely. But then he makes himself immortal by the means.

A chain of sparkling jewels from beginning to end. All in the highest degree genial and masterly. How admirably characterized the individuals, especially Eglantine and Euryanthe, and how the instruments ring!—out of the inmost depth they speak to us.

We were quite full of it, and talked it over a long time. The most genial piece in the opera seems to me the duet between Lysiart and Eglantine in the second act. So too the march in the third act in honor of the same; but the crown belongs not to particular parts, but to the whole.

ROSSINI'S "BARBER OF SEVILLE."

(Nov. 1847.)

With Viardot Garcia as Rosina. Ever enlivening, genial music; the best that Rossini ever made. The Viardot makes great variations in the music; scarcely a melody does she leave untrimmed. What a false view of virtuoso freedom! Still it is her best rôle.

AUBER'S "MASANIELLO."

(Feb. 22, 1848.)

The opera of a musical child of luck. The subject has kept it up. The music is indeed too coarse, soulless, and moreover hideously instrumented. Here and there sparks of genius.

WEBER'S "OBERON."

(March 18, 1848.)

Really too lyrical a subject. Also the music is inferior in freshness to other operas of Weber. A slovenly performance.

SPONTINI'S "FERNANDO CORTEZ."

(July 27, 1848.)

Heard it with rapture for the first time.

BEETHOVEN'S "FIDELIO."

(Aug. 11, 1848.)

Bad performance and incomprehensible taking of the *tempi* by R. Wagner.

CIMAROSA'S "MATRIMONIO SEGRETO."

(June 19, 1849.)

In technical respects (counterpoint and instrumentation) thoroughly masterly; but otherwise rather uninteresting, and at last really tedious and empty of all thought.

CHERUBINI'S "WASSERTRAEGER" ("LES DEUX JOURNEES.")

(July 8.)

With great delight have heard again for the first time for many years this genial, masterly opera. An excellent Water-carrier in Dall'Aste.

"THE PROPHET," BY GIAC. MEYERBEER.

(Feb. 2, 1850.)



The Piano-Forte.

From the London and Westminster Review, 1839.

"In treating of the piano-forte, in attempting to sketch its history and its capabilities—offering a few brief notices of those masters whose performances have given it new powers, and whose compositions have either founded or sustained its different schools—and separating the legitimate from the illegitimate, the ephemeral from the permanent, the true, in short, from the false—

the reviewer is offering the largest contribution in his power to the advancement of chamber music. For in England, where the national character is solitary rather than sociable, and its reserve is strangely mixed up with an impatience of drudgery and research—where the physical facility of throat and finger seems to be denied, such as makes the Italian street-singer vocalize without knowing it, and the German tavern musician place his hands on the bow or the keys in a correct position—the piano-forte will always be the instrument most largely in favor. To play respectably a solo on the violin or violoncello requires a devotion of labor and a self-renunciation, which is not common; while a quartet implies, beyond this, a sedulous union of sundry personages submitting themselves to one presiding head. The flute, it is beginning to be admitted, is so poor an instrument as to be placed almost out of the reach of the higher order of music save in orchestral concert."

"Of the piano-forte—the history of its wood and wire—a few words must be said. The head of the family was perhaps the Psalter, which, according to Mr. Hogarth, 'consisted of a square box, of small depth, over which was stretched a sounding-board of fir, and on this sounding-board were stretched a set of strings of steel and brass, tuned to the notes of the scale.' The psalter being played upon with two little rods, was substantially the same as the present street dulcimer. * * * As time wore on, the little rods were discarded, and the psalter became a clavichord, the feeble and tinkling grandfather of the piano-forte. Contemporary with the clavichord was the virginal, its own cousin, and progenitor of the larger and more complete harpsichord. * * * Early in the eighteenth century, the little octave spinnet, sometimes in its most ancient and triangular form, 'was used to accompany singing in private houses throughout Italy.' * * * The high esteem in which harpsichords were held from the first, may be gathered from the scull and music books which Salvator Rosa (that fiery and versatile genius) condescended to paint on the case of his instrument. * * * But the instrument's worthiest claim to modern respect lies in the fact of its increased capabilities and powers of effect, having called forth the exquisite *Passepieds* and *Sarabandas*, and fugues and *Allemandes* of Scarlatti."

Such is a brief history of the progress of discovery, which has finally resulted in the present piano-forte, which, however, has received numberless improvements since its first invention, and is doubtless destined to receive many more. From the history of the instrument itself, the reviewer is led to some account of the eminent composers for it, whom he distinguishes into five classes or eras, which we digest and bring together in the following form:

1. The *solid, harmonic* school, of the first composers, with Sebastian Bach at their head.
2. The *expressive, melodic* school, at the head of which is Mozart.
3. The school of *mere execution*, of *finger music*, brought out by Kalkbrenner.
4. The school of *genius*, availing itself of all the former schools for working up its own distinct and original conceptions. The first of this school, chronologically, was Clementi.
5. The *marvellous* or *hyper-romantic* school, of which Sigismund Thalberg was the first.

We shall follow the reviewer through his notices of these five schools and their principal composers.

1. We have already mentioned SCARLATTI'S compositions for the harpsichord. He is "one of the two earliest composers for keyed instruments, whose works are still heard with pleasure, the other being SEBASTIAN BACH." He is the first in whose works "the trammels of the old severe style, originating with the Church, are broken through," and that "with an intrepidity which must have been startling in the composer's day. But the name of Scarlatti has a further interest and significance, as belonging to the last Italian composer for keyed instruments. Since his time, a series of showy solo performers on stringed instruments—in their compositions little stronger

than the flimsy but graceful writers of vocal airs of agility or expression for the Farinelli or the Pacchierotti of the hour—is all the contribution made by Italy during the last hundred years, to our enormous stores of orchestral and chamber music; a contribution as worthless as it is meagre."

SEBASTIAN BACH'S works are "among music's least mortal possessions." The following are some of the reviewer's remarks upon this great composer.

"Any one who can execute the works of Bach perfectly, must have gained in the course of his study a force, a flexibility, and an equality of finger, which qualify him to attack the most impracticable of the great modern music; any one who can rightly give expression to his subjects, as boldly and beautifully conceived as they are at once strictly and variously brought out, may be trusted to approach the richest melody of Mozart, the loftiest and most dramatic phrase of Beethoven, or the wildest imaginings of Weber. We are not writing for the technical student, and it would therefore be superfluous in us to insist minutely upon the unapproached preëminence gained by Bach in one species of composition—namely, the fugue; to point out by what means he not only understood but sported with secrets merely talked about or awkwardly touched by others; to expatiate upon his preludes, at once strongly-knit and exursive, masculine in their boldness, child-like in their artless freedom. The public of musicians is already sufficiently alive to their rare excellence."

Even Bach himself, however, did not escape the French taste for frippery, which, from Couperin, spread over all Europe. The reviewer goes on:

"And yet, if we compare the piano-forte music of Bach with the harpsichord lessons of Handel, we shall find how infinitely small a portion of obsolete cadences and passages is to be ascribed to Couperin in the works of the former, compared with the no less obsolete roulades and trills and chains of mechanical sequences which the author of 'Otho' and 'Ariadne' borrowed from his mates of the Italian Opera. Each is a patriarch in instrumental writing; but Handel's periwig is the most obtrusive; and whereas Bach never wearies by his manner of descanting upon and amplifying his themes, Handel's instrumental compositions are often spun to a tedious length by contrivances of no greater significance than the modern Rossinian close, so happily compared by Liszt to the 'your humble servant,' with which every letter concludes."

"The august style of writing, carried to perfection by Bach, was maintained by none of his successors. The improvements made in the tone of the clavichord, now become a piano-forte, and the rapid spread of Italian music, alike tempted the composer to attend to pleasing and rhythmical melody, and to neglect those beauties and intricacies of structure, which in feeble hands, degenerate into wearisome formality. If we consult Charles Philip Emanuel Bach's (son of Sebastian Bach) 'Art of Playing the Piano-forte,' we shall find instances of all the modern airs and graces, nay, the very terms, which belong to the free style, and by an exaggeration of which, sentiment becomes affectation, and liberty licentiousness, as a thousand recent instances testify."

Thus Bach and his son prepared the way for the second school of the piano-forte. HAYDN followed, "uniting ancient science to modern melody;" and so far as this instrument is concerned, should be regarded as falling between the two schools.

2. MOZART stands at the head of the second school.

"His remarkable facility of execution, in which the man kept the promise made by the infant prodigy—his prodigal fancy in extempore performance, the haunting sweetness of his melodies, and his legitimate employment of the daily increasing powers of the piano-forte—whether alone or in combination with other instruments—gave both the man and his music a sudden and extensive influence, totally unprecedented. It was his good fortune to appeal to and touch all

classes. The uninstructed were fascinated by such delicious airs, as, till a recent period, had been the *singer's* exclusive property; the more enterprising among the scientific were enraptured by novel forms of composition and harmonies at once bold and smooth; while there was sufficient evidence of his power over the more rigid and stately forms of music, (as in his Sonata in the style of Handel, his duet fugues, &c.) to satisfy the purists that he had chosen a new path, not out of any disrespect to, or ignorance of, the old one, but from that eagerness of genius, which makes it always, more or less, a discoverer."

"So exquisite a compound of captivating execution, honeyed melody, and science wearing a form alluring rather than repulsive, as Mozart's music displayed, was certain to form the foundation of a school of art; and accordingly, we trace downwards from him a long line of pianists and composers, who reduced his works to principles, on which they formed themselves. Till a better title be found for it, this body may fairly be called the expressive school."

"As contemporaries of Mozart, but lingering far behind, by reason of their feebleness and self-iteration, even in one branch of composition which was common to both, LEOPOLD KOZELUCH and IGNACE PLEYEL may be grouped with him. Their accompanied Sonatas are now all but forgotten; but a student might do worse than familiarize himself with the simpler and more superficial forms of expression, by studying them as early lessons. They may also be thought excellent and natural practice for the hand, by those who have not yet subscribed to the principle of yesterday, which tends to make all the violent extreme positions of the fingers an elementary part of instruction. To this school, too, though possibly immediately influenced by the study of Clementi rather than Mozart, belong DUSSEK and STEBELT. Each added something to the executive powers of his instrument—the former being of the two the more substantial and dignified, richer in harmony, more sterling in the progression of his passages—the latter being the more airy in his melody, the more picturesque in his general conception, and sometimes the more happily imaginative. * * * The Sonatas of both will form part of the library of every classical scholar."

"A far greater pianist and writer of the Mozart school—we mean JOHN NEFOMUK HUMMEL—is now to be noticed. 'To me,' writes Zelter, 'Hummel is a summary of the piano-forte playing of our time, for he unites, with much meaning and skill, what is genuine and what is new. You are not aware either of fingers or strings; you have music. Everything comes out as sure, and with as much ease as possible, however great the difficulty. He is like a vessel of the worst material, full of Pandora's treasures.'

"It appears to us that Hummel was capable of greater things than he ever achieved—greater things than the natural and delicious melody, never sickly, however sweet, sustained by harmonies rich and choice, and alternated by passages of execution at once brilliant and substantial. For in his grand *Fantasia*, and in his Sonata in F sharp minor, he so nearly reached that highest possible style of composition, which evidences grandeur of thought as well as of style, as to justify the belief just expressed, that there were powers born with him, of whose existence he had but glimpses of consciousness."

"There are many persons who would have placed another in the post of preëminence just given to Hummel, that other being of course JOHN B. CRAMER. And in one point of view, as an author of *Studies*, Cramer undoubtedly ranks the higher of the two. Wherever the piano-forte is known as anything better than a machine on which some unwilling child is compelled to hammer out the tunes of the last new opera—wherever the true uses of the instrument are sought for, and expression made the one thing needful, even in the most complicated and rapid passages—Cramer's *Studies* have long been consulted and appreciated. Their composer suffered from his too willing connexion with shops and schools, by which he was led to beat out his

powers in manufacturing pretty lessons and *fantasias*, in which was no fancy; and hence his earlier Sonatas, written in those years of a man's life when art is loved more than money, are among his best works—but still not comparable with those of Hummel which have been cited."

"A name or two remain to be mentioned as having belonged to the expressive school. One of these is WOELFFEL'S, in his time—that is, about the beginning of the present century—considered as among the most surprising of European pianists. The name FIELD, too, must not be forgotten, as the artist whom we were rich enough to be able to afford to Russia. There is ALOYS SCHMIDT, whose mind is of far stronger fibre than Field's, and whose music is far too little known by those who profess attention to what is classical among us. Here, too, may be placed ONSLOW. None of these masters, however, has added enough of what is striking to the resources of his instrument, or to the student's library of noble thoughts and cunning combinations, to call for detail or analysis, where space is limited, so that a new and more important division of the subject in hand may be entered."

3. We now come to the third school,—that showy, school, which fashionable executionists have, from time to time, attempted to establish by the legerdemain of their amazing mechanical powers. It will never be wholly deserted, inasmuch as the myriad prefer the false to the true: would rather be seduced than convinced—inasmuch as about two persons in ten, who learn music in England, are endowed with any real capacity for the art, and one in fifty is awakened to any perception of its real objects and bearings." "Superseding the Sonata, the Rondo now had its turn;—just then, too, Rossini was in the zenith of his splendor, and his melodies, however fascinating on the stage, when sung by a Sontag or a David, could not but exercise an effect, destructive as it was fascinating, upon instrumental composition. Every thing was noise and sparkle and trickery. Though KALKBRENNER began with a better genius, it was presently laid aside for the popular idol, and he preferred to call down thunders of applause by wonderful flights of octaves, his exquisitely and glassy shakes, his brilliant divisions, round and clear *comme une chaîne de perles*, or his slower melodies meretriciously overlaid with ornament,—to receiving such less noisy but more permanent honors, as would have rewarded the exercise of thought and meditation. In England, at least, Kalkbrenner's music, with the exception of his Studies, is as wholly forgotten, as if he had not in his day been the Thalberg of the concert bill, while in the French capital his name is but sparingly mentioned by the passionate and enthusiastic *jeunesse*. His execution has been outdone in piquancy by Herz, in elasticity by Döhler, in velocity by Liszt, in delicacy by Chopin, in grandeur by Thalberg;—a fact to be clearly stated as a warning, for the benefit of those who permit themselves to be seduced from what is true and lofty by what is tinsel and superficial. A few other executive artists, far smaller than Kalkbrenner in their intellectual calibre, may be dismissed in his company. CZERNY, whose marvelous facility of covering music paper by the yard, is a weekly astonishment to those who make the tour of such music-shops as supply "schools"; PIXIS, who hid his light under a bushel, much about the time when Sontag quitted the stage, and who now travels Europe with his adopted daughter, Mlle. Francilla; and HERZ, only three years ago an indispensable at every London concert, but who last season was unwilling, unassisted, to risk a benefit entertainment on his own account—*sic transit gloria!* Before, however, the last named mechanist be passed over for worthier names, justice demands that he should receive such praise as belongs to an ingenious manufacturer of changes on airs—to a melodist, whose original themes have a *nerve* and piquancy partaking of the best features of ballet music. Nor let this be thought mockery in the place of commendation. Those who can write up to Taglioni and Fanny Elssler,—as Herz among the pianists and Mayseder among the violinists, are exactly calculated to do,—must possess such merit as belongs to elegance and

vivacity. Some of the brilliant duets for piano and violin, in which Herz has written the part for his own instrument, and De Beriot or Lafont that for the violin, may be mentioned as among the most vivacious and effective things of their kind. It is needless once again to point out how the wide circulation of all this music *ad captandum*, cannot but exercise a depreciating influence upon taste, and perpetuate the reign of what is tawdry and false, and fashionable among those, whom other nurture might have rendered capable of relishing thoughts as well as sounds, and expression yet more than finger-gymnastics."

[To be continued.]

FAILURE OF ITALIAN OPERA IN NEW YORK.—The *Courier and Enquirer* makes the following comments on the last of the many fruitless attempts to make Italian Opera support itself at the Academy of Music.

The Academy of Music.—The prospects of the establishment of Italian Opera in New York appear to be no brighter than they were ten years ago. The Academy of Music, a building which—whatever the pretense of the charter by which its proprietors exist as a corporate body—was erected with the sole object of being the home and the permanent home of Italian Opera, is closed and is without a lessee: the only man who has managed it with any semblance of success—MAX MARETEK—declining to take a lease on the terms prescribed, and no other we believe, and, we must say, we trust, being unwise enough to accept what he refuses. As our readers know, we have not sustained what is called "the popular view" of the opera question. For reasons so often stated that they do not need to be now repeated, we are convinced that no series of operatic performances worthy of anything but hisses, can be given here at the price of fifty cents or seventy-five cents for each admission; that price would not enable a manager to employ artists worth hearing and go through a short season without ruin or dishonesty. For the same reasons, we do not believe that a scale of prices ranging from one dollar to twenty-five cents will sustain a manager through the year. Mr. Maretzek has had a very successful month. But September is of all months in the year the month except August perhaps, in which the New Yorkers who are expected to support the opera are not in New York. The Academy of Music during the past month has been filled with strangers, almost exclusively: and to call the support of an opera house by strangers, the establishment of Italian opera, is an absurdity. It is very true that the opera houses of Europe look to travelers for a considerable part of their receipts; but they do not look to them for their support. In other words the opera would be 'an institution' in Paris, London, Vienna, Milan, &c., whether there were travellers or not; and the fact that it is 'an institution' in the great capitals of the other hemisphere, is one among the many inducements to visit them. The conductors of the opera there look at home for support, in one shape or another: what the travellers bring is profit. When the Italian Opera is on a similar footing here, then it will be established; and not till then. At present there are not enough people in New York—still less in any other city of the Union—who possess both the taste and the money to support, by the mere purchase of tickets of admission, such an opera company as a New York public now requires. For a poor operatic performance the New Yorkers will not accept: they will not even go and hiss it: they keep their money in their pockets, and stay away—the most ruinous of all courses to a manager, for it does not even get up an excitement. Years must elapse before an opera manager in New York can rely upon the money taken at his doors to pay his rent, and his company, if he ever can depend on that source three years together, either here or elsewhere, which we doubt. Italian Opera is a luxury, a part of the expense of which, over and above what is paid by the public, ever has been, and we believe for years to come must be, borne by a comparatively few enthusiastic devotees of music, or of fashion, or of both. An Italian Opera cannot be sustained from year to year with-

out subscribers; and that these subscribers should have a choice of seats in return for advancing the money by which the opera exists seems only fair; and the outcry about exclusiveness is but a plausible clamor. But, as we understand the matter, the gentlemen who administer the affairs of the Academy of Music go much farther than this. They demand for the subscribers in the first place the interest for their money, in the next, the choice of two hundred and fifty and odd of the best seats in the house, and in the next, the privilege of transferring these seats, with their tickets of admission, to whomsoever they please, either gratuitously, or "for a *con-si-de-ra-tion*." A lease of the house on such terms Mr. Maretzek very wisely has refused. The owners of the house have a right to demand what rent for it they please; but if they wish to be considered the worthy upholders of an institution established "for the encouragement of the Art of Music in the United States," they should be content with a very moderate interest: and they may also reasonably claim the choice of seats, but the price of their tickets of admission, which should be untransferable, should either be paid by them in the current coin of this republic, or else deducted from the rent. This the stockholders as a body should seriously consider; and meantime, while their vast and expensive house stands with closed doors, they may well devote themselves to the careful study of the fable of The Dog and the Shadow.

The Handel Society in London.

In 1843 a number of musical professors met together and instituted a society for the purpose of bringing out a complete and correct edition of all the works of Handel. The editions of Walsh, which appeared during the life-time of the composer, were justly considered imperfect, while those of Arnold were not only full of errors, but contained several remarkable violations of the text. The importance of the undertaking may be imagined from a computation made at the time, that, to carry it out satisfactorily, no less than 12,000 plates would have to be engraved. As the speculation of a music-publisher, it could only be entertained at so vast an outlay that there was little chance of the risk being incurred. As the task of a single editor the impracticability was equally great, the time and labor demanded being far beyond the power of any one professor to bestow, however zealous, competent, and indefatigable. With this persuasion, the originators of the society elected from among themselves a permanent council, with absolute control over its affairs. They limited the number of members to 1000, who, in return for an annual payment of one guinea, should be entitled to a copy of each work produced by the society during the year of subscription. The council was composed of Sir Henry Bishop, the late Dr. Crotch, Sir George Smart, Mr. Moscheles, Dr. Rimbault, Messrs. Sterndale Bennett, Macfarren, E. T. Hopkins, Henry Smart, and other gentlemen well known to the musical world. Proceedings were commenced with great activity, and in a very short time a vast number of subscribers were obtained, among whom were Her Majesty, Prince Albert, the Queen Dowager, the King of Prussia, &c. The council allotted the labor of editing the different compositions to various professors of eminence, who consulted the original manuscripts in Buckingham Palace, and every other available source, for the purpose of emending and perfecting the text. The works were produced in full score, with a condensed adaptation to the instrumental parts for the piano or organ. The first publication included the *Anthems for the Coronation of George II.*, edited by Dr. Crotch. Next, in close succession, came the *Allegro, Penseroso*, and *Moderato* (Mr. Moscheles), *Esther*, an oratorio (Mr. Lucas), *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* (Mr. Mudie), *Israel in Egypt* (Dr. Mendelssohn Bartholdy), *Dettingen Te Deum* (Sir George Smart), *Acis and Galatea* (Mr. Sterndale Bennett), *Belshazzar*, an oratorio (Mr. Macfarren), and *The Messiah* (Dr. Rimbault). A strange oversight was made by the council in connexion with *Israel in Egypt*. Mendelssohn expressed a wish to compose additional

accompaniments for that oratorio, as Mozart had done for *The Messiah* and *Alexander's Feast*; but, being overruled, he merely added a free organ part, and thus the council of the Handel Society entailed a loss upon the world which death has since made irreparable. There was the less excuse for this, since, subsequently, Dr. Rimbault printed the accompaniments of Mozart, in his edition of the *Messiah*, in small type, to distinguish them from the score of Handel. Notwithstanding the auspicious beginning made by the Handel Society, a relaxation of zeal, or some other antagonistic influence caused the subscription list gradually to decrease, until, at a meeting of the council, it was finally agreed that the society should be dissolved; and the plates of the works already published handed over to the firm of Cramer, Beale, and Co., with the condition that they should accept the liabilities of the society, and carry out the original scheme. The chamber duets and trios, composed by Handel, have just been added to the catalogue, under the new superintendence. These very interesting works were written by Handel in 1711, at Hanover, expressly for the study of the Electoral Princess; the words were provided by the Abbate Mauro Hortensio. Mr. Henry Smart the editor, has performed his task with consummate ability, and, in his independent accompaniment for the piano-forte, has imitated Handel's style with great success. There yet remains, we believe, enough for another book of chamber duets, including the four, to Italian words, which the great composer afterwards reproduced, in a more developed form as choruses, ("His yoke is easy," "And He shall purify," "For unto us a child is born," and "All we like sheep," in the "Messiah.") The style in which the present volume is brought out proves that Messrs. Cramer and Beale are disposed to follow with scrupulous fidelity the plan of the originators of the Handel Society. The publication merits encouragement, as one of the most important, interesting and costly connected with the art of music.—*Times*, 1852.

For Dwight's Journal of Music.

The Dancing Pages.

On the evening of the 16th June 1854, being the next after that of "Corpus Domini," I went with several friends to the Cathedral of Seville to see a most extraordinary spectacle, of which I have never met with any account in print nor ever heard mention by travellers. It was just at twilight, and the vast cathedral was lit only by the blaze of candles on and about the high altar, and a few lights in sconces hung against the nearest columns, which served but "to make darkness visible"—and the long aisles grander and more mysterious. The solemn tones of the organ added greatly to the effect, and fitly gave voice to the feelings of the devout among the crowd who knelt or stood about the Altar. As the last sounds died away, the Archbishop in gorgeous robes of state ceremonial, entered the space before the Altar, which is shut off from the body of the Cathedral by an iron grating. Attended by a body of priests he took his station on the right hand, while opposite him, on the left, a small orchestra of twenty or thirty musicians with stringed instruments, horns, bassoons, and clarinets, was arranged, leaving a vacant space between them. Then appeared from either side of the altar ten boys dressed as pages, in doublets of white satin, striped with red, with plumed velvet hats upon their heads, and with castanets in their hands. Advancing into the vacant space, they at a given signal began to dance a stately minuet, singing with the accompanying orchestra. Then followed a bolero, in which the castanets played an important part, and which they executed with perfect grace, still singing and dancing as the Jews before the Ark of the

Covenant. This is the theme of the bolero, which I noted down on my return to the house.



Anything more strange and theatrical cannot be conceived. The vast cathedral, the blazing altar, the priests and cardinals, the dancing boys in their quaint and charming costume, the kneeling crowd, and as a back ground the long dim aisles fading away into the black darkness, combined to produce an ensemble never to be forgotten. All grew spectral and like a dream as one by one the lights were extinguished, and we wended our way back to the streets filled with the crowd thronging its way homewards. Every evening for a week, the dancing was repeated at the same hour, and with the same strange ceremonies, and we went again and again to make sure that we had really seen with our bodily eyes so unusual and striking a spectacle.

The cathedral is at all hours a marvel of beauty—but at no hour more wondrous, than just towards sunset, when the rays of light pour through the painted windows, tinting the marble pavement with rainbow hues, and faintly struggling against the gloom gathering slowly in the far off corners of the edifice. A few kneeling figures, here and there, the beggar in his rags, side by side with the high born lady, over whose form the mantilla of rich black lace falls in graceful folds, equal in God's sight and in his temple, lend a living interest to the scene: and cold must be the heart which is not touched with devotional feeling, and dead the imagination which does not kindle with aspirations towards a better and a more spiritual life, while the eye is privileged to gaze upon the wonders of that most glorious of Gothic Minsters, the Cathedral of Seville. VIATOR.

Haydn's "Passion."

As this notable work is among the pieces announced for practice this winter by one of our societies, (the Mendelssohn Choral,) the following review from the *Quarterly Musical Review*, published in London (1828) may be of interest to many of our readers:

Haydn's Passione, or "Seven last words," with a separate Accompaniment for the Organ or Piano-forte, arranged from the full Score, by V. Nocollo. London.

Those who have witnessed the solemn ceremonies of the Catholic religion, can but be aware that much of their impressiveness on the feelings is made through the imagination, and as the music corresponds with the devotions it accompanies in character, it can but be regarded with the same emotions. *The Messiah* requires no assistance from external circumstances to heighten its effect, but of Mozart's Requiem (as fine a composition, perhaps, in another style,) no adequate idea can be formed, unless it is heard on an occasion similar to that for which it was written. Thus it is difficult to judge of the work before us without the concurrence of "place and circumstance;" nor indeed can it fairly be done without fully considering the peculiar occasion for which it was composed. That this may be fully understood, we quote Haydn's own preface, a translation of which is prefixed to Mr. Novello's edition of the "Passione."

"It is about fifteen years ago since I was applied to by a clergyman in Cadiz, who requested

me to write the instrumental music to the seven words of Jesus on the cross.

"It was then customary every year in Lent to perform an oratorio in the cathedral at Cadiz, the effect of which the following arrangements contributed not a little to heighten. The walls, windows, and columns of the church were hung with black cloth, and only one large lamp, hanging in the centre, lighted the solemn and religious gloom. At noon all the doors were closed, and the music began.

"After a prelude suited to the occasion, the bishop ascended the pulpit and pronounced one of the seven words, which was succeeded by reflections upon it. As soon as these were ended, he descended from the pulpit and fell on his knees before the altar. This pause was filled by music. The bishop ascended and descended again a second, a third time, and so on, and each time the orchestra filled up the intervals in the discourse.

"My composition must be judged on a consideration of these circumstances. The task of writing seven *adagios*, each of which was to last about ten minutes, to preserve a connection between them, without wearying the hearers, was none of the lightest, and I soon found that I could not confine myself within the limits of the time prescribed."

The difficulty of such an attempt was indeed enormous; a subject more extraordinary, more awful, or more sublime, for the inspirations of genius, could not have been found. It appears to us that the task was better suited to the vast and various powers of Handel, than to the milder feeling and more polished style of Haydn, although we are apprehensive that many of the followers of the ancient faith may perhaps differ with us in this opinion. Haydn has, with his usual method and uniformity of design, laid down a plan for the *Passione*, from which he has never swerved, and which has consequently ensured to his work a clearness and perspicuity that is doubly advantageous, since it almost ensures its certain impression and easy comprehension, both as a composition and as a performance. It must, however, be recollected it was first made for instruments alone, and that the voice parts were added at a subsequent period. Thus, in its original shape, it must be considered as addressing the feelings in a totally different language to that used when words affix definite ideas, and lead the hearers along in a given train. Upon such an occasion as the present, all the great and little differences that subsist between music and language must be brought to mind and allowed for. From the power possessed by the words of presenting definite ideas, its impressions are instant, distinct, and vivid; mere melody and harmony being unendowed with such absolute means, are constrained to draw their effects from resources less distinct. It would be impossible to add to the impression produced on the mind by the simple words of our Savior on the cross; Haydn has therefore merely adapted to each one characteristic harmony, and has then allowed his fancy to work its will, in portraying the varied feelings created by each sentence, which, by the spell of association alone, act sufficiently on the feelings to awaken such emotions as the composer loves to heighten by the powers of his art, and thus he has called into action all the secret springs of harmony, of which he alone possessed the impulse; and whilst parts of the composition may at first be thought to breathe too light a strain, it must be recollected, that adapting such words to music is like translating from a strong into a softer language. The original ideas may be expanded, and perhaps softened or refined, but the feeling is the same, put in a form congenial to its new vehicle.

A deep contrast between languor and force is the leading trait in the introduction, and induces the inference that the composer moulded his inspirations on the sufferings and the majesty of the Redeemer. The first *largo*, after the first word, *Padre celeste*, partakes of the same character; the words are adapted with exquisite feeling, and the construction of the parts combines strength with sweetness; and simplicity has been the

composer's aim in the second movement, *Tu di grazio sei sorgente*, supported by the charms of melody. The first bar of the subject is one, however, from the *Benedictus* of Mozart's Requiem, even to the accompaniment, and the resemblance is preserved in the character of the air throughout. This analogy is curious, inasmuch as it proves the occasional concurrence of great minds, for the character of the two compositions is the same throughout. No. 3, *Vergin Madre*, is exquisitely tender in parts; a splendid transition takes place at page 23, bar 6, in perfect consonance with one of those minute shades of feeling which music has by this means a power of developing above that of language. This beautiful movement is also distinguished by one of those peculiarities that so perceptibly marks the style of the composer. One of the most expressive passages, (page 20, bar 6) begins in a manner that would lead us to anticipate something of what we should denominate Haydn's prettiness, but it instantly afterwards, by a delicate transition unexpected by the ear, alters its whole character, and takes the heart as well as the ear by surprise. This little manoeuvre has evidently pleased the composer; it is often repeated, but is of a kind never to tire. At the last bar of page 18, there is, as appears to us, a slight defect, whether of the original score or the arranger we cannot tell; most probably of the former. It is the introduction of the D and B by the accompaniment before it is taken by the voices. The repetition weakens the force of the passage, which by its very nature is intended for the voice; and there is too wide a contrast between the treble sustaining the E \sharp against the instruments or organ without other support. This movement, however, is a perfect gem, bright from the mines of its creator, for its subject is particularly adapted to Haydn's style, and he has treated it with proportionate care. No. 5, *Perche m'hai derelitto?* is a splendid movement in F minor, and its greatest beauty consists in the solidity of its style, and the mystery which by means of modulation it is made to express, whilst at the same time a beautiful melody is maintained, which keeps up the interest. The accompaniments and intervening symphonies are exquisite.

A symphony for wind instruments is next interposed, of which it is impossible to judge without the score; but we depend on the word of the arranger, who, in a note, states it to be "a perfect model of masterly counterpoint and refined scoring." It cannot perhaps be better compared as a composition than to Haydn's own "*Chaos*," with which it ranges in equal companionship.

The whole construction and development of No. 5, *Gesu sciamava*, is perfect. The two opposite feelings of horror and supplication are combined and contrasted with the most exact discrimination and the nicest sensibility. The whole subject is contained in a few notes, yet it is developed in so masterly a manner that it is never monotonous, but acts with more certainty on the feelings from its very condensation. Thus the effect of confining the words "*Geju sciamava*" to the tenor as a solo, and the simplicity of the passage is awfully splendid. No. 6, *Consummatum est*, is scarcely so intense as the rest; perhaps Haydn would have done well to have sacrificed his melody to the awful sublimity of his subject. The movement is characteristic, but not sufficiently so. No. 7, *Nella tua mano, Signor*, is also a little too florid. The *L'uom dio mori*, with the earthquake, depends for effect on the orchestra. The chorus can only assist in that effect by the power which the combination of a number of voices bestows.

Splendid as the "*Passione*" really is, we cannot consider it as the finest of Haydn's works, in which light it stands, we believe, throughout Germany. It appears to us that the subject is of too awful a nature for the peculiar character of his mind. His intellect was of too refined a texture to be capable of encountering and developing an incident of such towering sublimity; one which stands alone in the history of the world, and would almost seem to require a corresponding elevation in the mind which would attempt its treatment. The "*Passione*" does not affect the feelings with the awful, irresistible solemnity of *The*

Messiah, the *Requiem*, or even with the grateful emotion of its composer's own *Creation*. Yet in such a work the effect should be instantaneous and certain. Still it is a masterpiece, and the lovers of Haydn will recognize in it all his purity of harmony and unity of design, and welcome it as a substantial support, if not the most splendid of those raised by the genius to the fame of its immortal composer.

Music Abroad.

England.

BIRMINGHAM.—On the 2d and 3d of September a festival was held here for the inauguration of a new music hall. There appears to be a rage for splendid new halls and new organs in the larger towns of England lately. The excuse for the new one in Birmingham, where there already existed one so famous, is thus set forth in the *Times*:

The committee of the great hall in which the Birmingham Triennial Festival (the grandest periodical music-meeting in Europe) is accustomed to be held, with a view to the especial interests of the General Hospital, on behalf of the funds of which the festival is given, rather discourage than promote the frequent performance of oratorios and other great music works depending for effect upon the congregation of masses. They believe, or profess to believe, that if oratorios were often produced during the interval of the festivals, they would lessen the attraction of the triennial celebrations, and so militate against the just expectations of their noble charity. Thus, while Birmingham possesses one of the finest music-halls in the world, and is essentially a musical town, it enjoys fewer opportunities of offering musical treats to its inhabitants than either Liverpool or Manchester. The Festival Committee, who are also the committee of the General Hospital, will not let their hall (where the immortal *Elijah* was first presented to the world) for any performances whatever, except those in which they are themselves immediately concerned. Even their organ, a work of more than ordinary magnitude, is dedicated almost exclusively to the use of their own organist, who instituted the cheap Monday concerts, in which the attraction consists for the most part in his own playing. But the Birmingham people are notably a musical people, and consider that a festival on a large scale once in three years is not enough. A committee of gentlemen amateurs of music was therefore instituted some time since with the object of breaking up the monopoly of the Festival despots, and this resulted in the project of a new and spacious music-hall, at which oratorios or miscellaneous concerts might be given to the Birmingham public as often as convenient or necessary. The hall being completed, it was of course desirable to "inaugurate" it in an appropriate manner, and an engagement was contracted with Mr. ALFRED MELLON to get up a series of performances in honor of the occasion.

The "*Messiah*" was performed on the first day, and on the second the "*Elijah*." The orchestra (Mr. Alfred Mellon's Orchestral Union) numbered between 50 and 60; the chorus, chiefly local, hardly exceeded 100 voices. The principal singers, like the orchestra and chorus, were all English: Mme. Clara Novello, Miss Dolby, Mr. and Mrs. Weiss, Messrs. Thomas, Montem and Sims Reeves. The solos and the orchestra are highly praised, but the choruses "left much to desire." There were miscellaneous concerts in the evenings, in which were performed Beethoven's Symphony in C, (No. 1); the "*Tell*" Overture; Fra Diavolo ditto; *Der Freyschütz* and *Zampa* ditto; Mendelssohn's "*Italian*" Symphony; Solos on the new organ, by Mr. Simms; Extracts from Costa's "*Eli*," and a variety of vocal pieces from Mozart, Haydn, Weber, Donizetti, Verdi, Hatton, Wallace, &c. &c.

GLoucester.—The annual meeting of the three choirs of Worcester, Hereford and Gloucester commenced Sept. 9th, and lasted three days.

The preliminary arrangements were under the direction of Mr. Amott, organist of the Cathedral, who also conducted the musical performances. The programme, although exhibiting little variety or novelty, was, on the whole, good. The principal vocalists included Mesdames Clara Novello, Viardot Garcia, Clara Hepworth, Lockey, Temple and Alboni; Messrs. Lockey, Weiss, Thomas, Gassier and Sims Reeves. The orchestra and chorus comprised in all 300 players; leaders, Messrs. Blagrove and Sainton; organist, Mr. Townsend Smith (of Hereford Cathedral); accompanist, Mr. Done (of Worcester Cathedral).

The festival opened as usual with a full cathedral service, including a voluntary on the organ, anthems

by Handel and by Mendelssohn, the *Preces* and *Responses* of Tallis, &c. "*Elijah*" was performed on the second morning, after a service of old English music; and on the third morning, Haydn's "*Creation*," Mozart's "*Requiem*," selections from "*St. Paul*," and the following miscellany:

Air—Mme. Novello, "Let the bright Seraphim;" Chorus—"Let their celestial concerts," Handel... Duet—Mrs. Hepworth and Mr. Reeves, "Forsake me not," Spohr. Air and Chorus—Mr. Weiss, "Qui tollis," Haydn. Duet—Mesdames Novello and Viardot, "Quis est homo," Rossini. Recitative and Air—Mr. Sims Reeves, "Deeper and deeper still;" Air—Mrs. Hepworth, "Farewell, ye limpid springs," Handel. Duet—Mme. Viardot and Mr. Reeves, "Te ergo," Graun. Chorus—"Hallelujah," (Mount of Olives,) Beethoven.

There were miscellaneous concerts each evening. The gem of the first was Alboni's splendid singing of the air, *Deh per questo*, from Mozart's *Tito*. The whole first part of that concert consisted of selections from Mozart's operas. Then followed the finale to Mendelssohn's *Loreley*, in which Mme. Novello took the solos of Leonora; and then the usual kind of miscellany of glees and operatic pieces. The programme of the second concert was as follows:—

PART I.—Overture, *Der Freyschütz*, Weber; Madrigal, "Down in a flow'ry vale," Festa; Aria, "Casta Diva" (Norma) Bellini; Trio, "Quanto a quest' alma," Rossini; Aria, "Deh vieni," Mozart; March and Chorus, "Crown ye the altars," Beethoven; Cavatina, "Ah, quel giorno," Rossini; Concertante, for two violins (No. 2), Spohr; Duetto, "Lasciami! non t' ascolto," Rossini.

PART II.—Symphony (No. 3), Haydn; Ballad, "I wake," Bergenswold; Duet, "Amor! possente nome," Rossini; Song, "The Village Blacksmith," Weiss; Song, "I love my little native Isle," F. Mori; Duet, "Di capricci," Rossini; Ballad, "Bonnie Jean," Linley; Glee, "Summer Eve," Hatton; Aria, "In questo semplece," Donizetti; Quintetto, "Sento, oh Dio," (Cosi fan tutti), Mozart.

BRADFORD.—As a sample of organ concerts in England we may mention one lately given at St. George's Hall, by Mr. W. T. Best, of Liverpool. The organ performances were varied with vocal Selections by the Bradford Choral Union. The audience numbered upwards of 1500 persons. Mr. Best has engaged to give four similar concerts. The following was the programme:

PART I.—Organ Concerto, No. 2, Handel. Romanza, from Symphony, "La Reine de France," Haydn. Choral March, Becker, by the Bradford Choral Union. Fuga (F major), W. T. Best. Air with variations, Rode. Part Song, "Where's the gain of restless care," L. de Call, by the Bradford Choral Union. Wedding March, Mendelssohn.

PART II.—Overture (*Preziosa*), Weber. Part Song, "Go speed thy flight, sweet evening breeze," Otto, by the Bradford Choral Union. Andante, from Symphony in C minor, Beethoven. Prelude and Fuga (E major), J. S. Bach. War Song, "The banners wave, the drums are beating," Kücken, by the Bradford Choral Union. Chorus, "May no rash intruder," Handel. The Nightingale Chorus—Solomon. Grand Offertoire, (No. 3, op. 35) Lefebvre Wely.

Paris.

THE OPERAS.—(*Corres. of London Mus. World.*)—As the summer wanes and the autumn sets in, the musical season here begins to exhibit some indication of life. For a long time nothing has occurred at any of the lyric theatres worth calling your attention to. The *reprise* of *Guillaume Tell* at the Grand-Opéra has been the latest novelty; but the reproduction of Rossini's greatest work has not proved as successful as was anticipated from the immense pains and time expended on it. The fault is principally owing to the cast, which does not comprise one great name. M. Gueymard, as Arnold, has entirely failed to recall one reminiscence of Nourrit or Duprez, and sings the music very indifferently. Moreover, the Parisians will never forgive him for not being able to sing the *ut de poitrine* in the "*Suivez moi*," which he most wisely did not even attempt. Besides, all the music of the original score is not restored, as was promised, so that the real musical public are disappointed and offended. The scenery, however, is splendid, and the ballets most admirable, which, with a band and chorus almost beyond reproach, goes far to conciliate the audience. Auber's *Cheval de bronze*, with new recitatives and ballet music, is about to be put into rehearsal. I have no doubt that it will prove even more successful at the "Grand" than the "Comique" Opera. The *Cheval de Bronze* I always considered one of the composer's most delightful works. At the Italiens, the most lively preparations are being made for the re-opening next month. M. Calzado has already enlisted a numerous and powerful company, including the following artists:—Mesdames Alboni, Piccolomini, Prez-

zolini, Fiorentini, Gambardi, Dell' Anese, Martini, Valli; Signors Mario, Carrión, Luchesi, Graziani, Nerini, Angelini, Mathieu, Ballestra, Solieri, Cuturi, Rossi, Zucchini, Soldi, and Corsi. Several of these names, are unknown to me, but I cannot refrain from pointing to that of Signor Corsi, who has long been considered one of the most eminent barytones in Italy, and I am certain will be much liked in *certain parts*. He is something in Ronconi's serious line. Mario and Piccolomini will not arrive until November, M. Calzado having extended their leave for one month. Signor Bottesini is reinstated as conductor. It is affirmed that Signor Verdi has made a large demand for permission to play the *Traviata* and other of his operas at the Italiens. M. Calzado has thought proper to refuse, and intends bringing out the *Traviata* on his own responsibility leaving it to the composer to prove his claim by law. The *reprise* of the *Prophète* and the *début* of Madame Borghi Mamo as Fides comes off to-night (Thursday) Sept. 18.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, OCT. 11, 1856.

NEW VOLUME.—Our number of last week, Oct. 4, commenced a new half-yearly volume. The month of October too is properly the commencement of the academic year in music; it is the beginning of the musical "season." We shall be happy therefore to receive the names (and dollars) of as many new subscribers as desire a weekly paper, which shall keep them "posted up" in musical matters, and aid them to discern and to appreciate what is true and worthy amid so much that is pretentious and false. Give us a large subscription list this winter, and we will make your paper doubly worth it.

□ We can furnish one and one only complete set of the Journal of Music bound; for which of course we must charge an extra price.—With the exception of two numbers only, (which occur in Vols. V. and VI.) we can furnish volumes bound or unbound of the Journal from the commencement. Also single numbers.

Thalberg.

The great pianist, so many times expected, is at last actually in New York. He arrived by the steamer last week, with the indefatigable Ullman for his business agent, and will commence a series of concerts there upon the 20th; after which he will of course visit Boston and the other cities of the Union. His presence will be something of an event in our musical world. We shall all of course be eager to hear one of the two most celebrated masters of the modern virtuoso school of pianism. With the exception of LISZT, no name has stood so prominent, so long, as THALBERG. Liszt has long since retired from the arena, in which he was always crowned and always excited the wonder of the crowd; he has abandoned solo-playing in public, and taken to composing and to bringing out the great ensemble pieces of the masters, and to playing patron to new aspirants for the honor of original composers. It must be ten years, too, since Thalberg closed his concert career, to which he now returns in a new country. Thalberg was the founder of this whole virtuoso school. It was he who first undertook to overcome the short-comings of the piano-forte by wonderful rapidity and wide grasp of execution. It was he who first made the piano speak through the whole length of its keyboard like an orchestra, letting the melody sing distinctly in the middle or tenor region, accompanied at once by a deep bass and a perfect aurora borealis of swift, flickering arpeggios above.

Many of us remember the time when HERZ, with his light arabesque prettinesses, in the shape of variations upon well-known airs, was the won-

der of the age; for it is ever the few who know the deeper charm and inspiration of real master works of genius, like the Sonatas of BEETHOVEN. Herz came to America after his day had passed in Europe, and after even our ears had become accustomed (through the hands of skilful followers) to the then astonishing fantasias by Thalberg, with whose name all reports of concerts in England, France and Germany were filled. We all recollect the wonder and delight with which we first listened to the stately symmetry, the broad architectural splendor of his Fantasia upon "Moses in Egypt," with the light blaze of arpeggi accompanying the Prayer. It was, if we remember rightly, at the first concert given in our city by the elder of the brothers RACKEMANN, about the year 1839, who was the first to introduce us to the New School piano compositions—to THALBERG, LISZT, HENSELT, DOEHLER, CHOPIN, &c., although it is almost a sin to class a pure star of genius like the last with lights that must prove so much more ephemeral. Since then Thalberg has been played to us by all the brilliant concert pianists, who have visited these shores, and finally by not a few young rising virtuosos who were born among us. So far as it is possible to know Thalberg by his compositions, interpreted to us as they have been, not unskilfully, although at second hand, our musical public is pretty well acquainted with the style and nature of the man. We know his music, that is, we are familiar with those pieces of his by which he has been most known everywhere, and which he still chooses to make the *chevaux de bataille* of his concerts. We have heard Jaell, and Satter, and Heller, and Strakosch, and Mason, and we know not how many more, perform his Fantasias on *Moise*, *Don Juan*, *Lucia* and *Les Huguenots*—pieces which exhibit his chief power as an arranger, translator (*traductor*) and embellisher of operatic themes and scenas for the piano solo. And we have heard those gentler, less pretending pieces, like his *Andante Tremolo*, and some of his *Nocturnes*, in which there is a certain poetry and delicacy of feeling, something like original creation. It only remains now to hear them from his own hands, from the fingers of their creator, and of the, in many respects, first executive pianist of the world. For if he have not all the energy the fantastic boldness, the singular magnetism of Liszt, he is without his faults of questionable eccentricity. There is a symmetry, repose and clearness in his style, corresponding, it is said, with the gentlemanly ease and quietness of the whole man. Music, which owes its peculiarity of structure so entirely to the wants of the performer in connection with his instrument, ought surely to be heard at first hand, as the composer-player renders it, to give a perfect idea of its beauty. And this opportunity we shall soon have.

Besides his Fantasias, Nocturnes, Etudes, Waltzes, Impromptus, &c., Thalberg has composed in larger forms, Concertos, a Trio for piano, violin and 'cello, and more recently an Opera in four acts, *Florinda*, of which some account may be found in this Journal for Sept. 2, 1854. It is his intention, as we understand, to give quite a number of concerts in New York, commencing on the 20th of this month; and he will play almost exclusively his own compositions, including those with which we are familiar, as the *Moise* and *Don Juan* fantasias, the *Andante*, &c. The repertoire also contains his Trio, a Concerto by

Beethoven, and one or two other classical pieces. Would it not be a fine thing for us here in Boston to hear him play that Beethoven Concerto, under the statue of Beethoven, in one of the grand orchestral concerts of the "Beethoven Concert Society"? Let us hope.

We shall be better able to speak of Thalberg hereafter. Meanwhile we commence copying on another page a good historical classification of the noted composers for the piano, written some years since by Mr. CHORLEY, which will help us somewhat to station the new-comer; and we place here an abstract, which we once made for another purpose, from the sketch of him in M. Fétis's Universal Biography of Musicians.

Sigismund Thalberg, the celebrated pianist, was born at Geneva, January 7, 1812. At an early age he was taken to Vienna, where his musical education commenced. He is said to have received lessons from Sechter and from Hummel; but M. Fétis, states that Thalberg himself denied this, as well as the assertion that he acquired his talent by indefatigable labor. At the age of fifteen he began to excite attention in saloons and concerts. At sixteen he published his first works, now regarded by himself as trifles, but in which there are indications of the peculiar style which he has since developed. One who knows Thalberg as he has since become, both as pianist and as composer, says M. Fétis, will find it interesting to examine his "*Mélange sur les thèmes d'Euryanthe*," (op. 1.) his fantasia on a Scotch air, (op. 2.) and his impromptu on motives from the "*Siège de Corinthe*," (op. 3.) which appeared at Vienna in 1828. Two years after this he made his first visit to England to give concerts. The journals of that day are full of him. He had written for this tour a concerto, (op. 5); but it was not for this speciality that his talent fitted him; the constraint of the classical form and of the orchestra was too much for him. His thoughts then turned to the development of the sonorous power of the piano; to the combinations of various effects; and, above all, to a novelty of which the invention properly belongs to him. The old school of pianists was divided into two principal categories; namely, the brilliant pianists, such as Clementi and his pupils, and the harmonists, such as Mozart and Beethoven. Each of these schools was subdivided into several shades. Thus Dussek, by his national instinct, tended to the harmonic school, although he wrote incorrectly, and must be considered one of the brilliant pianists. Kalkbrenner afterwards followed the same direction. On the other hand, Hummel, and then Moscheles, pianists of the harmonic school, gave more of brilliancy to their compositions than did Mozart and Beethoven. But in both schools we remark that song and harmony on the one hand, and the brilliant traits on the other, are always separated, and that these two elements of piano-forte music only appear one by one in turn, and in an order nearly symmetrical. In the brilliant passages of these two schools it is the scales that predominate; the arpeggi appear only at long intervals, and almost always in the same forms. In the singing and harmonious passages, if the two hands are brought together they occupy but one side of the key board; if they are widely separated they leave a void between them; the harmony is not filled up. Such was the state of piano playing when Thalberg conceived the idea of uniting song and harmony and brilliant passages in one, instead of letting them alternate with one another by a sort of formula. He sought to make the whole key board speak at once throughout its entire compass, leaving no void in the middle. This thought, gradually matured and developed, led him to the discovery of a multitude of ingenious combinations of the figures, whereby the song or melody could always be heard strongly accented in the midst of rapid arpeggio passages and very complicated forms of accompaniment. In this new system the scales ceased to be a principal part in the brilliant piano music; different forms of arpeggi took their place; the fingering was greatly modified; and the frequent passage of the thumb became its essential characteristic. It was by means of the thumb, taken alternately in the two hands, that the melody established itself in the centre of the instrument.

In 1830 Thalberg made an artistic tour through Germany. In 1834 he accompanied the Austrian Emperor Ferdinand, as pianist to the imperial chamber, to Toplitz, to the meeting of his sovereign with the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia. There his playing awakened a warm interest. But his true European fame dates from his success in

Paris during his first visit there in the latter part of the year 1835. Since then he has made frequent tours in France, Belgium, England, Russia and Germany; and everywhere the precision, delicacy, and finish of his playing, the beautiful sound which he draws from his instrument, the brilliant effects which he combines, and the individual charm which he has put into his musical forms, have excited a general enthusiasm. These forms, imitated by most of the new school pianists in their compositions, or rather their arrangements of themes from the operas, have become the fashion of nearly all the piano music of our time.

CONCERTS.

Mlle. PARODI has continued her concerts through a second week, to close this evening. The audiences have been always large and the appetite, as indicated by encores, insatiable. Indeed, repetitions have been not the exception but the rule—the unjust rule of a half-musical majority, fatiguing to artists, and to the really musical minority.

We heard the concerts of Saturday and Tuesday. The former opened with a baritone aria by Mercadante, from *Zaira*, one of the most pleasing concert pieces of the kind which we have heard for some time, and the better for being new to most of us. Sig. BERNARDI sang it in his usually chaste manner, with rich, sonorous, manly voice, to which we find it a pleasure to listen. PAUL JULIEN played De Beriot's "Tremolo," that is to say, his violin fantasia on that solemn slow movement from Beethoven's "Kreutzer Sonata," and he played it admirably. Mlle. PARODI sang the great song of Fides from "The Prophet": *Ah! mon fils!* The quieter portions of it sounded finely with her rich, large voice; but she overstepped the bounds of euphony, of music, in some of those passionate outbursts, betraying a tendency to overdo things by sheer physical energy. How different from the chaste, refined style of LAGRANGE! Sig. TIBERINI gave us Mozart's *Il mio tesoro*, not much a *la* MARIO to be sure, but yet creditably as to execution and expression; and one could take pleasure in the music itself and thank him for it. His voice grows upon us, but sounds better in simpler melody and in declamatory passages than in anything so florid. PARODI sang *Com' è bello* from "Lucia," effectively in the main, beautifully in parts, but still wounding the ear and breaking the spell at times by a harsh loud high note. M. STRAKOSCH tickled the ears and dazzled the sensuous imagination of the crowd by "Musical Rockets" on the Grand Piano, whose tones he knows how to bring out in all their sonorousness and brilliancy and sweetness. His pretty showpieces do indeed belong to the category of musical fireworks; but the superb sweep and grandeur of the rocket we hardly found in this case. The Trio from *Lucrezia Borgia* was very finely sung by all three artists, and produced great effect. Of course repeated.

The Second Part opened with a French Romanza, from Halévy's *L'Eclair*, sung by Sig. BERNARDI. Edgardo died again in TIBERINI's sweet and die-away tenor. PARODI called forth roars of laughter by her romping "Rataplan,"—a clever piece of vocal tom-foolery. PAUL JULIEN played an ingenious fantasia by Allard, on themes from *La Favorita*, delighting by his exquisite execution, his firm, pure violin tone, his faultless truth of intonation, and graceful mastery of all points of expression. The concert closed with Martini's "Laughing Trio," so long familiar in

English. Parodi's laugh was of rather a forced order and not the most refined.

On Tuesday evening (first of the extra series) the young Paul played one of De Beriot's fine Concertos admirably well, and made the "Carnival of Venice" as grotesque and humorous as almost any one. Sig. BERNARDI made that hacknied baritone air from the "Trovatore": *Il Balen*, &c., sound better than we yet have heard it, and gained still more upon appreciative listeners by his dignity and truth of manner in the Trio from *Attila* and the Barcarole from *Don Sebastian*. Sig. TIBERINI gave us real pleasure in his twice singing of Mozart's *O caro imagine*, from the "Magic Flute." It was rendered with delicacy and with fervor. As before, he was less successful with *Spirto gentil*, still employing unmeaning echoes and other far-fetched bravura. Mlle. PARODI pleased us more than in any other piece this time by her large, simple, truthful and expressive delivery of Mendelssohn's "Jerusalem, thou that killest," &c. The singer seemed to subordinate herself to the noble and deep-feeling music. Her declamation of the *Marseillaise* was powerful, splendid as far as voice and physical energy go, but not imaginative in a high sense, not poetic and inspired; although it took hugely with the multitude. She sang it well, but we had rather hear RACHEL sing it badly. The trios were the well-known one from *Attila*, which went finely, and that coarse laughing piece again.

Musical Chit-Chat.

The subscription list for the Eight Orchestral Concerts of the BEETHOVEN CONCERT SOCIETY grows from day to day. Do not forget that it absolutely requires a pledged subscription of *fifteen hundred sets of tickets*, at the very low price of three dollars, to make it safe or possible to give the concerts at all. Certainly our musical public will feel it to be a great mistake, a calamity, if they lose them by any want of alacrity in subscribing. Our love of great instrumental music is now distinctly put to the test. After November, when the weight of long political anxiety shall be somewhat lifted from us, will there not be comfort in the Fifth Symphony? Shall we not rush to great orchestral music as one rushes from hot streets in dog-days to the sea-shore?

The great organ for the Music Hall is no longer a matter of uncertainty. At a late meeting of the Directors, it was finally determined that, the conditions prescribed by the stockholders having been complied with, a contract may now be made, and the President of the Boston Music Hall Association, Dr. J. BAXTER UPHAM, was authorized to proceed to Europe for that purpose. Dr. Upham left on his mission by steamer Canada on Wednesday, and the best wishes of many friends and of all lovers of music and Art go with him. To his enthusiasm and perseverance are we chiefly indebted for the success of a project, which we feel confident will reflect honor and credit upon Boston and its public-spirited citizens in all coming time.

We passed a delightful evening last week at the rooms of the German "Orpheus," or Männerchor. It was a social entertainment in true German style: music, conversation, lager beer, cigars and comic recitations blending or alternating in agreeable proportions. The Germans understand the art of having a good time. There was a healthy, hearty good cheer, a perfect sense of freedom, as well as a tone of artistic refinement about it. Yet most of the singers are plain mechanics. Under their excellent leader, Mr. KREISSMANN, they sang good German

four-part songs and choruses among others, the Pilgrim Chant from *Tannhäuser*, "O Isis and Osiris," from the *Zauberflöte*, part-songs by Mendelssohn and others, and some very comical students' songs. OTTO DRESEL, too, was present and contributed some pieces by Mendelssohn and Schumann on a fine Chickering grand piano. Also Mr. LEONHARD, a young pianist just from the Conservatoire at Leipzig, who played a very difficult Polonaise of Chopin admirably, and who is a musician of rare talent and a true artistic tone. It will be seen by a card below that he proposes to reside and teach in this city, and we wish him all success. Mr. KREISSMANN sang several songs by Franz, which were received with the most unfeigned enthusiasm; and there were other songs by members of the Club.

At the German Opera in New York last week the pieces were *Masaniello* and *Der Freyschütz*. This week, on Thursday evening, Lortzing's popular music to Fouqué's "Undine" was given for the first time. In spite of the slashing criticisms of those who have been so spoiled by Italian opera, that they regard the individual singer as of more consequence than the music, it seems to be the opinion of the best judges that this troupe presents a better musical and dramatic ensemble than our cities have been used to; Bergmann's orchestra is superior... The Italian Opera at the Academy came to an abrupt close last week, Maretzek not having prevailed on the stockholders to relinquish their claim to the best seats gratis: a condition which has proved ruinous to every manager. The piece was *L'Etoile du Nord*. Max was called out for a speech, in which he set forth the reason of the repeated failures in quite pungent language. He has since given two operatic concerts, and it is said we may expect his troupe in Boston by the 20th.

Mme. DE WILHORST has given a second concert in New York, in which the *Tribune* thinks she fairly settled the question that she is destined to take rank among *prime donne*. . . . A musical society in New York, the oldest in the country, called the Euterpean Society—something like our Amateur Orchestra, we believe—held its 58th anniversary last week. . . . Ullmann, the indefatigable, who flies back and forth over the Atlantic like a shuttle, weaving star after star of European theatre and concert notoriety into the great American web of Art and—speculation, has engaged the famous contralto, Mme. ANGRI, who has been thought second only to Alboni. Her speedy arrival is looked for. It is not stated whether she is to concertize with THALBERG.

Advertisements.

BEETHOVEN CONCERT SOCIETY.

It is proposed by the Committee who managed the Orchestral Concerts of the last season to give a series of *EIGHT CONCERTS* at the Boston Music Hall, during the coming winter, under the name of the "Beethoven Concert Society," provided *fifteen hundred sets of tickets* shall be subscribed for previous to Oct. 20th.

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The undersigned proposes to visit Germany again in the course of the ensuing autumn, and would be happy to receive orders for any or all of the above works. The publisher of this Journal has kindly consented to receive and forward to him all such orders, and also to receive and distribute the volumes when forwarded from Germany. It is possible to import these works at the prices given below, only upon the plan of a subscription; nor can any be ordered until a sufficient number of subscribers are obtained to bring the expenses arising from transportation, duties, exchange, &c., within reasonable limits. The works will be delivered at the publishing office of this Journal, on the following terms—provided that a sufficient number be ordered:—

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